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8 December 2009

Cambridge Planning Board
Cambridge Community Development Department
344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: St James Development

Dear Planning Board Members,

We are pleased to provide herein our most recent responses to the items that the Planning Board brought up during the November 17th hearing.

First, I'll share an update regarding the project's review process with the Cambridge Historic Commission. This is one of the main items your board had questions about:

Subsequent to the Planning Board hearing, we had a hearing with the Cambridge Historic Commission on December 3rd. The attached revisions to our submission reflect some of the "design progression" that the Historic Commission has suggested. We are scheduled to return to that board on January 7th with the expectation that satisfactory response to their discrete list of questions - which our design and development team find eminently workable - will allow them to recommend a "Certificate of Appropriateness" rather than a further Landmark study.

The Cambridge Historic Commission also gave us the impression that we should anticipate that at the conclusion of a successful review and development process with them, the property would likely be Landmarked. This would assure the "as-permitted" integrity of the new project going forward into the foreseeable future. They also anticipated that this path would likely satisfy the Massachusetts Historic Commission. Oaktree and St James are amenable to this process of review, which we believe will ultimately result in all three reviewing bodies (Mass and Cambridge Historic Commissions and Cambridge Planning Board) having appropriate input to the project, while at the same time protecting the church's historic integrity and not jeopardizing the project's feasibility through further delays.

Responding to the other questions that the Planning Board had that aren't being provided in illustrations:

Meeting with Neighbors: The PSNA and Alice Wolfe are in the process of setting up dates for the appropriate meetings in cooperation with St James and Oaktree.

Materials and colors: Sasaki, St James and Oaktree are investigating possible cladding choices and have been asked by the Historic Commission to include them in this decision-making process. They concurred with the Planning Board that the stone base was too heavy and not like likely to have a 'good





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conversation' with the beautiful pudding stone of the church sanctuary. A more suitable, durable form of masonry is being researched for the base of the building, and further discussions with them regarding both material and colors will ensue. We will bring some samples to the Dec 15th hearing.

Bays and privacy: It is Oaktree's intention to build in louvered blinds as an integral part of the bay windows. This enables privacy, natural light management, and some degree of thermal control for residents as well as a more unified exterior appearance.

Lighting fixtures: Wall mounted, down-lighting fixtures will assure a focus on the intended walking and driving surfaces while respecting the environmental concern for eliminating (upward directed) light pollution. A discrete, low but adequate level of lighting will be provided in the handicap spaces at the top of the ramp. The necessity of having those spaces readily accessible precludes a door option. Lighting choices are being researched, and images of a couple options are provided herein.

Height and footprint of building: The overall height of the proposed structure as well as the footprint at the Beech Street entry have been further adjusted to favor the views of the church. The roofline is 2' lower and the Beech St entry court has new proportions, including 2 ½' extra width. These changes are illustrated.

Trash compactor: A compactor will be incorporated into the maintenance plan for the project, enabling a reduction of space that trash containers take at street level.

Courtyard landscape and tree selection: The Historic Commission regards the review of the replacement of the current "Knight's Garden" as part of its purview. Sasaki and the church will be engaging in further discussions regarding this most important space, including the CHC during the next few weeks before the Jan 7 meeting. Sasaki and Oaktree will also work with the City of Cambridge Arborist to determine the most appropriate species of trees to plant near the northwestern and northeastern elevations.

Children's play area surrounds: The current children's education program at the church is similar to the one anticipated with the new proposal, and has play structures like those planned that would be only a few feet from their present location. As there have been no neighborhood issues regarding the current arrangement, we believe that the normal 6' screening fence will be adequate.

We look forward to reviewing these project-related items with you on December 15th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gwendolen Noyes".

Gwendolen Noyes



An aerial photograph of a city street grid. A prominent church with a dark roof and a steeple is located in the center-right. The surrounding area is filled with residential and commercial buildings. The text 'St. James Regeneration: Preview of December 15 Hearing Exhibits' is overlaid in green and white.

St. James Regeneration: **Preview of December 15 Hearing Exhibits**

Sasaki / Oaktree
December 8 2009



We are currently working with the Cambridge Historic Commission to develop the design of the church garden and landscape surrounding the building.

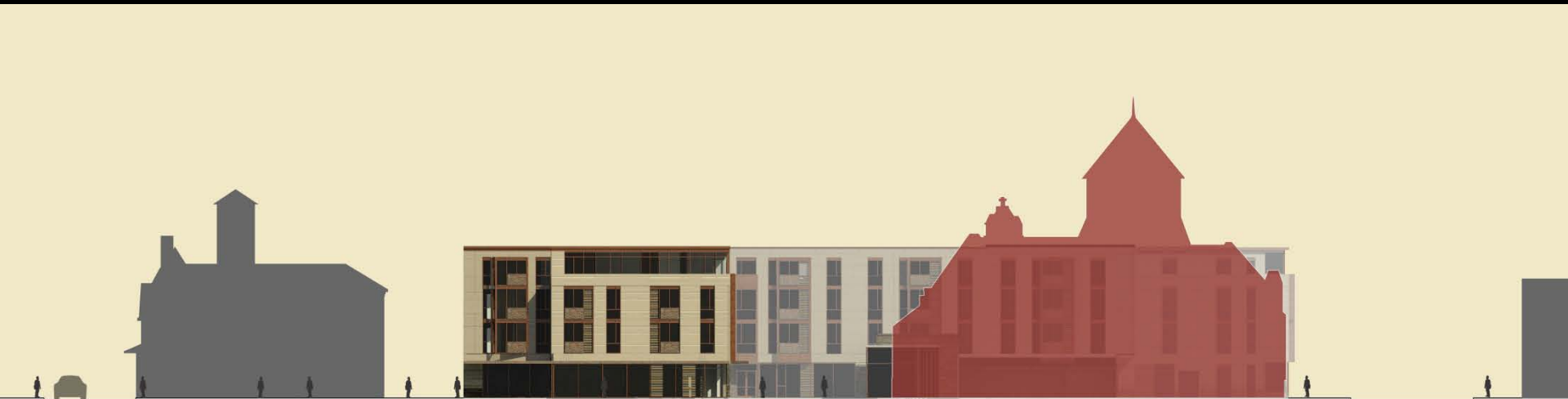
CHURCH SPACES surround the garden



FIRE STATION

GARDEN

ST. JAMES



We have simplified the facades and lowered the overall height of the building by a minimum of 2' to ensure that the church remains the dominant visual element on the site.

SOUTH ELEVATION – Mass. Ave.



DECEMBER SITE PLAN
Mass Ave Views



The Mass. Ave. end of the building has been redesigned to de-emphasize the 4th story. We will continue to work on color studies to achieve the optimal effect. Setbacks and material changes at the 4th floor can help reduce the visual scale of the building. A notch at the corner allows better views of the fire station from Mass. Ave.



DECEMBER SITE PLAN
Mass Ave Views



We are working with the Cambridge Historic Commission to finalize the building materials and colors, as well as the landscape plan for the courtyard and buffer zones.



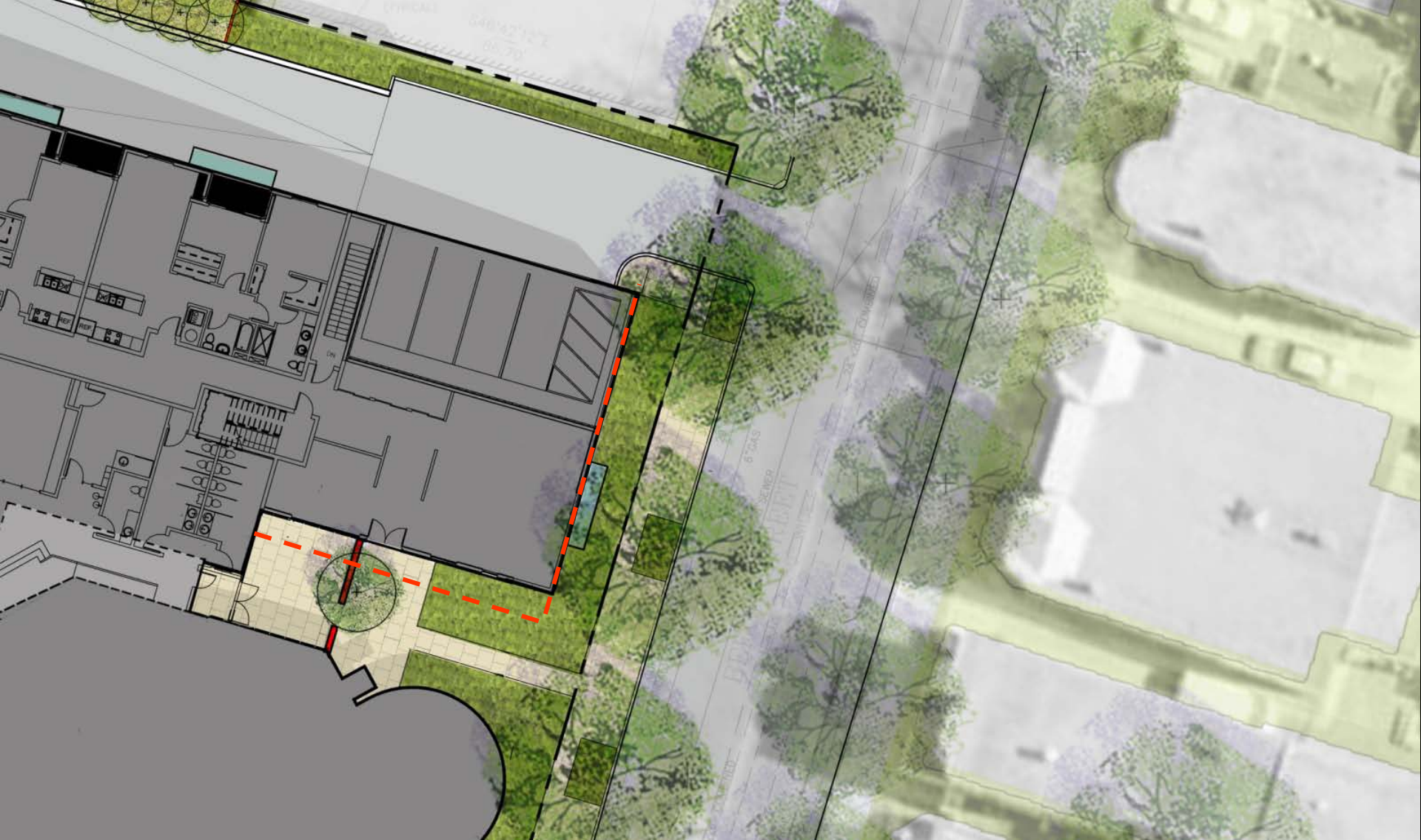
The Cambridge Historic Commission has requested that we work with them to finalize the building materials and colors. Bay windows will incorporate natural wood blinds to allow privacy for residents while maintaining a consistent appearance on the exterior facade. A masonry material will assure durability on the portions of the building facing Mass. Ave.



DECEMBER SITE PLAN
Mass Ave Views



The Mass. Ave. end of the building has been redesigned to de-emphasize the 4th story. Setbacks and material changes at the 4th floor help reduce the visual scale of the overall building. A notch at the corner allows better views of the fire station from Mass. Ave.



BEECH STREET ENTRANCE

The face of the building has been relocated further away from the church, to allow better views of the apse from Beech Street, and to provide a more generous entry court between the buildings. A decorative metal fence has been added to separate the church entry from the residential entry. The parking area will be lit with footlights to minimize visual impact.



Ramp and Parking: Lighting Alternates

Step lights will be mounted low on the ramp and parking area walls to light the paving, and to avoid glare into the neighbors' yards.



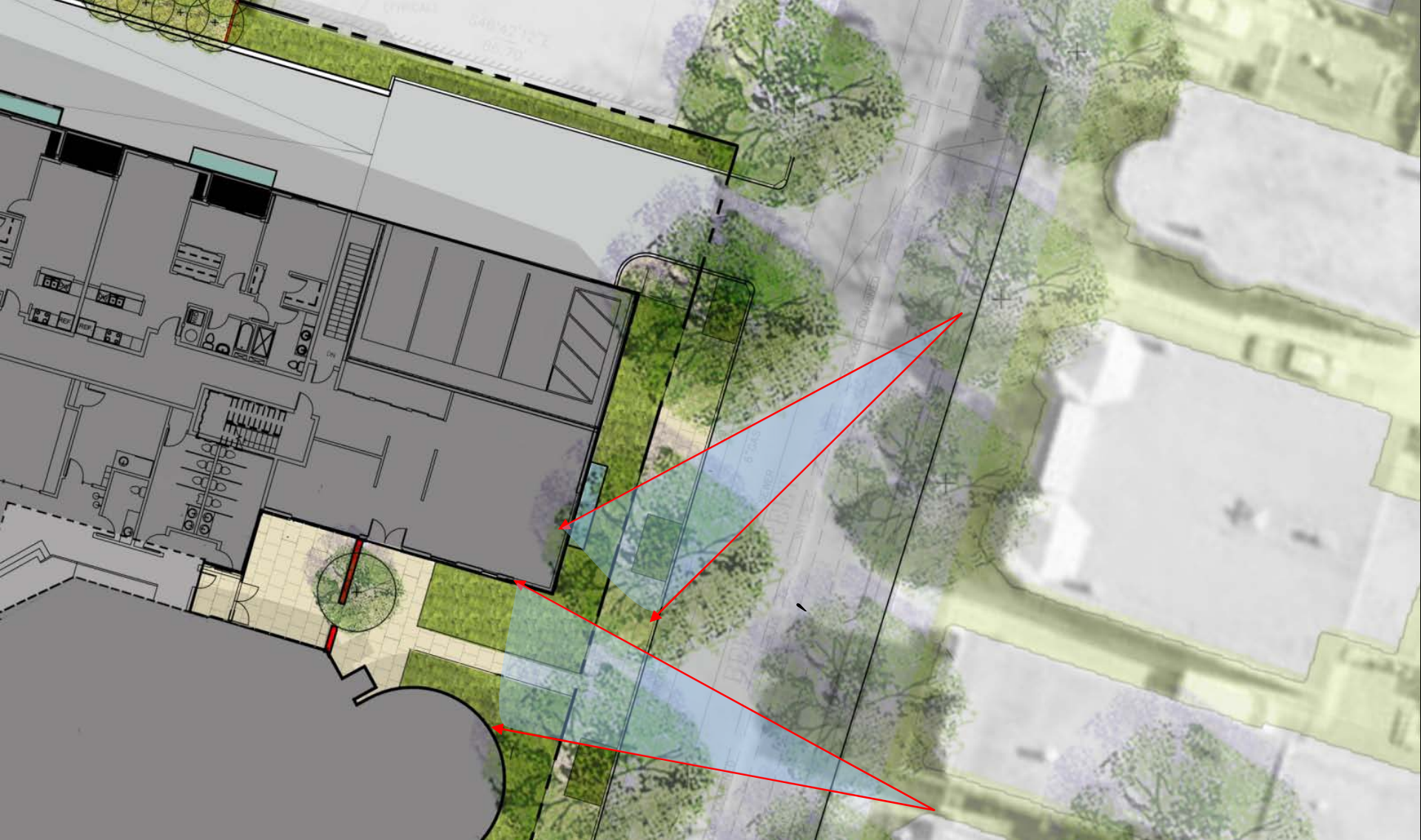
MASS. AVE.

ST. JAMES

KINGDOM HALL



EAST ELEVATION - Beech Street



BEECH STREET ENTRANCE
Views



The Beech Street façade has been improved by a setback at the 4th floor, and a change in materials at this level. The new building has been moved away from the church to expand the entry court.

VIEW – Beech St.



A glass corner at the base of the building enhances the sense of openness and allows better views of the church and entry court.

VIEW – Beech St.